CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

re; Giving more time to motor cyclist and Scooterists for equipping with helmets

SRI T. R. SHAMANNA (Fort) —I call the attention of the Minister for Transport and Tourism to the need for giving some more time to the Motor Cyclists and Scooterists for equipping themselves with helmets.

SRI M MOHAMAD ALI (Minister for Transport and Tourism).— I beg to make the following.—

A new Rule viz., Rule 327-B has been inserted in the Karnataka Motor Vehicles Rules, 1963 by Notification No. HD. 48 TMR 72 dated 9th January, 1976 making it compulsory for the drivers of Motor Cycles/Scooters to wear safety helmets of Indian Standard Specification. This rule however is not applicable to any Motor Cycle/Scooter/ Moped with less than one H P.

The proposal to make this rule was published in Notification dated 3rd February 1975 and objections were invited. After hearing various objections, it was decided not to insist on the use of safety helmets in the case of pillion riders and the rule has been applicable only to drivers of such vehicles. This rule came into force from 1st February 1976 and the fact that this would come into force from 1st February 1976 was also given wide publicity in the News papers on 10th January 1976.

Although sufficient time of three weeks was given, the drivers of these vehicles do not appear to have made any concerted effort to equip themselves with a helmet and it is learnt that that they did so only for the last one or two days before 1st February 1976.

It has now been brought to the notice of Government that helmet are not readily available in the market and that it would require some more time for the drivers of Motor Cycles/Scooters to equip themselves with helmets.

However, Government do not propose to postpone the date from which the rule is to come into force. With a view to providing some more time to the drivers of these vehicles, Government will issue instructions to the enforcement authorities to go a little slow in the enforcement and not to initiate prosecution proceedings against the non-users of helmets and to permit them to compound the offence and let off such persons with a warning. This contession would be in force only till the end of February 1976.

2-00 P.M.

SRI T. R. SHAMANNA —The decision to enforce the use of helmets was taken last year and after hearing objections, the matter was kept under suspension. All of a sudden. it has been made a must. In view of the large number of vehicles that are there in the State, say, about 20,000 or so, is it not advisable that sufficient steps are taken to see that helmets are made available in sufficient number and at a reasonable cost? Will it not be a great inconvenience to the drivers of scooters and motor cyclists to buy them all of a sudden? Besides, on account of the abnormal demand, the dealers are charging exorbitant rates for them. In order to check that, will it not be possible for the Government to see that they fix up some specification and arrange to make them available in the market at a reasonable price and in sufficient number. Besides, is this enforced in any other State than in Karnataka? Is it also not possible to check the speed and the carelessness with which driving is made?

SRI M. MOHAMMED ALI. —It is not as though the rules have been enforced all of a sudden The rules have been published in the year 1975 and a very long time has been given to these people to buy them But unfortunately what has happened is that the moment the rules were not brought into force, the riders have postponed the purchase of helmets. On the 31st of January they are not available. Naturally such a situation is bound to arise. Every one went on postponing. Even the manufacturers were also not sure what was going to happen. That is why the concession of one month will be given to them. They are only going to warn them.

SRI M. S. KRISHNAN.—The cost has gone up from Rs. 55 to Rs 85

SRI MOHAMMED ALI.— It depends upon the quality. It ranges from Rs. 140 to 165. The market is regulated on the basis of demand and supply. Naturally there is bound to be some increase but that cannot be helped. The idea of introducing stage by stage is fantastic. How can that be done There are three factories in Bangalore and they will step up production.

SRI D. DEVARAJ URS (Chief Minister).—This law has come into force because of what ... because of innumerable accidents. The motor cycle and scooter riders were exposed to great danger. Whenever these persons fall, the first impact is on the head. directly the head strikes against the ground and the danger of a person losing life instantaneously is greater. That is why the helmet had to be prescribed. At one stage people thought that time should be given So, it was kept by for a while. Even during this time innumerable accidents used to take place.